

BHARATA

भारत
संस्कृत
संस्कृत
A.K. Dikshit

Name - Ashob Kumar Singh

BHARATA

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Edited by

DR. A. K. DIKSHIT

M. A., Ph. D.

Department of English,

Meerut College, (Meerut University)

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P R E F A C E

This is an extract from the English translation of the *Ayodhya Kanda* of the *Ramayana* as told by Kamban, one of the great classic poets in Tamil, a beautiful language of South India rich in literature. The *Ramayana* is deep-rooted in Indian culture and most of us read the *Ram-Charit-Manas*, the Hindi epic by Tulsidas, with devotion and reverence. This poem aims at putting before the students the ideal character of a brother who was the most innocent man. Moreover the students will realize that India is one and there is one culture from the north to the south and from the east to the west.

The *Ayodhya Kanda* of Kamban's *Ramayana* from where this extract has been taken, is the finest and the most dramatic portion in the *Ramayana*. This extract, therefore, will teach the art of appreciation of beautiful poetry, particularly of blank verse which is so much the vogue in India today.

It is hoped that besides encouraging students to read English poetry with interest, this small poem will give an insight into Indian culture, will encourage them to build character and will also develop emotional integration.

—Editor

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INTRODUCTION

The *Ramayana* is one of the two great epics of India deep-rooted in her culture. Valmiki was the author of the *Ramayana* in Sanskrit. In the twelfth century A. D. Kamban the great classic poet of Tamil, made a Tamil rendering of the great epic, and in the sixteenth century Tulsidas composed it in Hindi (Avadhi).

Scholars believed that Kamban belonged to the ninth century, but latest research has established on solid proof that he flourished in the twelfth century. Son of Adityan, this great Tamil poet was born in a village, in the Tanjore Distt., in Madras State most probably about the fourth decade of the twelfth century. He was orphaned at birth and brought up by a wealthy landlord of a neighbouring village, whose benevolence afforded him the opportunity of studying ancient Tamil literature and Sanskrit poetry. Kamban was very intelligent even as a child, and was endowed with a marvellous imagination. He was soon famous as a poet, and was respectfully invited to the courts of Chol and Kaktiya kings who ruled their respective lands in the Deccan in the latter part of the twelfth century. He originally named his epic, *Ramavatar*. Tulsidas wrote for his own satisfaction and joy, but Kamban sang the story of Rama under the intoxication of the wine of Rama's love. The *Kambramayan* has 4400 lines and is one of the especially famous epics in the ancient Tamil literature. As poetry it is the best in Tamil. Kamban had great self-respect and was humble, grateful and full of the love of country and of language. He has painted the peculiarities of provincial culture against the vaster background of Indian culture. While Kamban and Tulsidas kept the same thread of

the story, they made some variations to suit their times, and one of the important variations was that they painted Rama as God incarnate, the Supreme Power himself. All these versions are read with great reverence throughout India.

The Government of India set up an academy of letters, Sahitya Akademi, which took up the programme of the publication of Indian classics. At the instance of this Academy, C. Rajagopalachari, the elderly statesman and a great man of letters, translated the *Ayodhya Kanda* of *Kamban Ramayana* in English. The present extract is from this translation by C. Rajagopalachari. C. Rajagopalachari was born in 1878. A very well-known political leader, he has been an important member of the Indian National Congress and took an active part in the country's struggle for freedom. He was imprisoned on five occasions. He held several ministerial posts before as well as after freedom and was the Governor-General of India from June 1948 to January 1950 and Chief Minister of the State of Madras from 1952 to 1954. His contribution to literature has been varied. He has written several books in Tamil and an equal number in English.

The *Ayodhya* canto deals with the story of Rama's going to the forest for 14 years, the death of king Dasaratha, the anguish of saintly Bharata due to the misdeeds of his mother, and his going to the forest to persuade Rama to come back. It is the richest part of the *Ramayana*, full of dramatic scenes, emotions and pathos and thus makes excellent poetry.

Though the *Ramayana* is an epic, Kamban wrote it as a lyric to suit the atmosphere created by the constant reminder that Rama is God Himself reborn as man to do great deeds on earth. About the lyric quality of Kamban C. Rajagopalachari observes,

"The lyric cannot be a lyric without conspicuous economy of words, without sparkle and lilt ; these are Kamban's special characteristics, not to speak of the depth of his thoughts, his human understanding and his wonderful poetic imagination."

What C. Rajagopalachari has said of Kamban, is true of his translation too. The English rendering is also full of the beauties and lyrical qualities of Kamban.

Giving the aim of his English rendering C. Rajagopalachari says,

"I trust this will be a window for people who do not know Tamil to see something of a great classic in that ancient beautiful tongue of South India."

The present editor also aims at the same thing while giving an extract from the English translation of *Kamban Ramayana*. It clearly shows us how rich Tamil is and how rich its English translation can be.

This extract begins when messengers go to call Bharata back to Ayodhya from his maternal grand-father's. Rama has already left for the forest. Bharata hastens to Ayodhya, and what he sees : His father dead and his dear elder brother banished to the forest for fourteen years. He is full of indignation at all this and specially because he was made the motive for these misdeeds. What an irony ! The most innocent of men, Bharata, was the motive behind the most cruel deed, the exile of Rama, the beloved of all !

Bharata is Kamban's supreme ideal. Note the following conversation between Guha, the paragon of loyalty to Rama, and Bharata when Bharata was on his way to the forest with his army and men to call Rama back to Ayodhya.

Asked Guha

'Prince of mighty frame,

What is your mission ?'

Said Bharata in answer :

'My father that ruled an empire

Deflected the course of ancient custom.

I have come to set that right

And take the king home to the city.'

The woodmen's chief who heard these words

Burst into tears of joy.

Down he fell on the ground again

And locked Bharata's beautiful feet

In his rough hands and wept.

'The kingship of the world was yours,

Which at your mother's desire

Your father gave to you.

You refused to touch the gift

Avoiding it as an evil thing.

Grief is in your face

Like a great river dammed :

Admirable soul, your greatness is more

Than a thousand Rama's, believe me, prince.'

The full picture of Bharata's greatness comes out in the present extract.

THE STORY OF THE RAMAYANA

C. Rajagopalachari has given the story of *Kamban Ramayana* as follows :

Dasaratha, the king of Ayodhya, had four sons. They were the gift of the gods to the aged king who had been long without issue. The gods had obtained a boon from Vishnu that he would himself come down to earth as man to end the tyranny of Ravana and so Rama was born as Dasaratha's eldest son by Kausalya, the senior queen. Rama's brothers were Bharata, Lakshmana and Satrugna. When Rama was young, quite a boy, he with his brother Lakshmana was taken by the great rishi Visvamitra with the permission of Dasaratha to his hermitage to protect his sacrifices from the Rakshasas who had been annoying the rishis. Rama performed the mission with great success and received from the sage miraculous weapons and blessings. He then accompanied Visvamitra to the capital of Janaka where he married Sita, having bent and broken Siva's bow, which had been proclaimed as a condition for obtaining the hand of Sita and which many a suitor had failed to do. After some years Dasaratha resolved to instal Rama as prince regent. On the eve of the coronation day his youngest queen Kaikeyi, at the instigation of her maid Manthara, asked him to fulfil the two boons he had formerly promised to her. Dasaratha had to agree. By one of these two boons she demanded the installation of her own son Bharata as prince regent and by the other the exile of Rama for 14 years. The king was shocked and tried his best to dissuade her from making her wicked demands, but was at last obliged to yield. Rama gladly agreed to go into exile to save his father from breaking this

pledge. He was accompanied by Sita and his devoted brother Lakshmana.

Bharata, who was in great indignation at what had happened, went to the forest to meet Rama and persuade him to return and take the reins of government. But Rama would not agree and asked Bharata to be regent to enable him duly to fulfil the decree of Dasaratha. This was agreed to and Rama continued as an exile in the forest.

The two brothers killed several powerful Rakshasas during their exile and punished Ravana's sister who made improper advances. Ravana resolved to disgrace Rama by carrying off his wife for whom, under his sister's incitement, his passion had been roused. He accomplished this purpose with the help of Maricha. After several fruitless inquiries Rama ascertained through Hanuman where Sita was kept in prison. Thereupon Rama invaded the island of Lanka and killed Ravana. Rama returned in triumph with his wife and friends to Ayodhya, where Bharata had been ruling as proxy. Rama was crowned king and reigned long and righteously.

—: o :—

AN APPRECIATION OF THE POEM

The present piece is a narrative poem, an extract from the English translation of *Kamban Ramayana*. It is an Indian theme having a background of Indian culture. Naturally the figures of speech and idioms are from Indian life. It gives the story of that part of the *Ramayana* when Bharata is called back to Ayodhya from his maternal grandfather's and Rama leaves for the forest. Bharata is anguished. The council of ministers of state and citizen leaders request Bharata to rule the state and save the people from ruin, but Bharata decides to go to the forest to persuade Rama to come back. The army from Ayodhya marches towards the forest; they meet Guha on the way, Rama is anguished to learn about the death of his father Dasaratha. Bharata tries to persuade him to come back to Ayodhya, the place of his duty, but he is determined to fulfil the pledge of his father. In the end it is decided that Bharata would rule Ayodhya for Rama while Rama would remain in exile for fourteen years. Bharata then takes the sandals of Rama and, with a heavy heart, comes back to Ayodhya with the queens and the army.

The poem presents before the students an ideal character which is the greatest need of the hour. Bharata is an ideal for all in these days of materialism and avarice.

This poem may be easily called a garland of lyrical songs full of emotions, pathos, and dramatic scenes. The meeting between Bharata and his mother, between Bharata and Kausalya, the council of ministers of state and citizen leaders and elders, the meeting of Bharata and Guha and ultimately

the meeting of Bharata and Rama are all examples of unparalleled pathos and emotions. C. . Rajagopalachari has observed,

"What can approach the exquisite pathos of the situation where the most innocent of men, Bharata, has become the motive for the most cruel and wicked deed ever recorded—the banishment of Rama, beloved of all, to the forests of Dandaka ? Bharata's meeting with his mother Kaikeyi, and the scene where the doubly-bereaved mother of Rama, Kausalya, receives Bharata at first with natural suspicion and a sense of distance and then seeing his utter innocence completely breaks down—these scenes are painted with unrivalled beauty by Kamban."

—:o:—

THANKFULNES

B H A R A T A

From Ayodhya went the messengers
To bring Prince Bharata home.

Day and night,

As fast they could, they rode.

And when they reached the palace of the prince

They charged the men at the gate

At once to announce to the prince

That Dasaratha's men had come

And desired to be seen.

'Prince, men have come from the king your father
Bearing a message for you,' they said.

And up he rose to see them

For great was his eagerness

To hear from the king his father.

'Is he well, the king my lord ?' cried he,
Not waiting for them to speak.

'He is well,' said they,

And quieted his anxious heart.

'And is the dear crown prince well ?'

'Yes,' said they and he clasped his hands
In thankfulness and joy.

And after loving enquiries

About the rest, the envoys said,
 'Here is the royal epistle—
 May it please you take it,
 Prince, whose beauty baffles the painters !'
 He stood to receive the royal letter
 And first he placed it on his head,
 As if it were holy ashes
 Received at a sacred shrine
 And then opened it to read.

Glad he was to be asked
 To go to Ayodhya at once
 For eager was the prince
 To be with noble Rama again.
 No time was lost
 To find auspicious hour or day;
 Chariot and convoy were ordered at once,
 His uncle's leave was taken
 And he stood by the chariot
 Calling for Satrughna to hasten.

Fast they sped seven days and nights,
 Crossing hills and rivers, they reached Kosala,
 Famed for green fields and over-flowing channels.

But what was this he saw ?
 The fields were empty and no one at the plough,
 And young men in the streets

Wore no flowers on their necks
And Ayodhya's face was like a withered lotus.

'The faces I see have no laughter in them;
No incense issues from the houses I pass;
The maids have no flowers on their heads;
Unlighted are the house lamps.'
'It seems I must prepare,' he thought,
'For sad tidings.'

Straight he went to where the king should be
But found him not.
'This is strange,' he thought;
His brave big frame now trembled in fear.
Came hurrying a maid who rushed to him and said :
'Your mother bids you come at once.'

Mother and son were locked
In joyous embrace;
'Is father well ?' she asked,
'The queens and my sisters ?'
'Yes, yes,' said the prince,
'But tell me where the emperor is;
I long to kiss his lotus feet,—
I found him not where he should be.'

The hard-hearted queen
Spoke unperturbed :

name ASHOK
KUMAR
SINGH

'Son, summoned by the gods above,
The king your father left us :
Like a conquering hero
He has joined the gods;
Grieve not for this !'

Like a javelin sharp these words
Pierced the prince's heart
And he fainted and fell.
His beautiful locks spread out,
He lay on the ground
Like a tall tree blown down in a sudden storm.

Pale his lips, and his beautiful eyes
Streaming tears, he asked :
'What have I heard from you, my mother ?
Fire cannot burn as your words have burnt !
O father, Oh how could you leave
Your people thus to lament ?'

Thus did he weep disconsolate
Like an orphaned child
And to the loving women around
He said, 'Now let me go
To dear Rama and kiss his feet
Who now is father and lord
To fatherless me.'

Whereat his pitiless mother
 Spoke these cruel words :
 'Brave prince, he whom you seek
 Has gone to the forest
 With his wife and brother.'

The prince was dazed;
 'Let me hear,' said he,
 'What more have you to tell.
 Rama to the forest ?
 What was his crime
 For which the books ordained exile ?
 And how did the angry gods
 Bring it about ? Tell me all.
 How did the fates contrive ?

'Rama could not have sinned
 Except for some great good;
 Tell me now, was it after or before
 My father's death ?
 I understand this not
 Good mother ! Tell me all, I do implore.'

Said Kaikeyi, 'My son !
 It was no deadly sin
 Against *guru* !
 Or violent deed
 Deliberate or accidental;

Even when the king was alive
 Radiant like the sun himself
 Rama went to live in the forest.'

'Was he guiltless ?
 Did no enemies fall on him ?
 Was there no unintended deed
 To bring this penance about ?
 Then why when father was alive
 Should a son go for penance ?
 And how did the king die ?
 Tell me now and keep me
 No longer in suspense.'

'Son, listen now, I obtained from the king
 A boon and made the kingdom yours.
 And got the prince exiled,
 To make the kingdom safe for you;
 Grieving for this the emperor died.'

१२११

Bharata's hands were on his ears
 Not bearing to hear these cruel words;
 His brows quivered, and his breath
 Was like a furnace throwing flames,
 And his eyes spouted tears of blood.

Fierce was the prince's wrath
 Against his evil mother;

But he refrained from violent deed
 As the vision of Rama rose
 Before him sternly disapproving.

But he let go angry words !
 'Your machination foul and wicked
 Has killed my father and consigned
 My noble brother to forest life :
 And you boast to me this double achievement.

'Yet I tear not your wicked mouth :
 And do you want me to complete
 This abominable plan
 By eagerly seizing my brother's crown ?'

He lapsed silent, and thought for a time;
 'No, *dharma* is not dead,' said he :
 '*Dharma* has survived wickedness.
 For Ayodhya had a king who died
 And a prince his heritage renounced
 That the pledged word may still be honoured;
 And if Bharata be mean enough
 To profit thereby, blame we the times ?'

'No, the crime shall be
 My own misfortune
 And cannot belong to the times
 That produced Rama and my father'

He could no longer bear
 To stay by his wicked mother
 And left to find some consolation
 At queen Kausalya's blessed feet.

When Bharata saw the bereaved queen
 Grief overwhelmed him once again;
 He dropped like lead on the ground
 And bathed her feet in tears.

'Mother dear !
 Your wretched son craves your blessing.
 Oh, where is my father gone ?
 And where is my great good brother ?

'Am I to face this ruin, alone ?
 Unfriended wretch am I indeed.
 Could you not hold him back for me ?
 Were you all and your combined strength
 Unequal to the power of Death ?'
 And like a stricken bird he fluttered
 And rolled on the ground and wept.

'Heaven's charioteer that drives
 Darkness out of this world
 Was father to this ancient royal clan;

Came a scion of that house to be born
 Bharata, to be another name for shame—
 O my mother, why was I born ?

Thus wept the prince unrivalled,
 Strong of limbs and spotless in mind.
 The twice bereaved queen
 Felt a joy all over,
 As if her exiled son beloved
 Returned and stood before her.

She gathered Bharata up ^{दुखी दृष्ट}
 And pressed him to her anguished bosom; ^{कान्ती}
 'Prince among princes,
 Bharata my son !

In the long line of your great race ^{वंश}
 There was none so noble as you, O my own son !
 Moved was she to her depths as she thought
 And thought again of all he had said.

When the sad people of the city learnt
 That Kaikeyi's son was disconsolate,
 They held hurried consultation
 And summoned at once a general council
 Of ministers of State and citizen leaders,
 Army captains and provincial chiefs,

Family priests and bearded elders;
And round the handsome prince they sat
Each in his appointed place.

When all were ready the good Sumantra
Turned to Vasishtha, who understood.
Spoke he then to the prince these words :

imp
'The king your father is dead and Rama,
Eldest born, has renounced and gone.
The ~~mantle~~ ^{throne} has fallen on you unsought
By the king's boon that your mother had earned.
This State must needs be ruled, O prince :
This is our well-considered counsel.
It is for you to save the people;
In you alone, prince, lies their hope.'

attent
Gravely the sage did speak these words,
But Bharata trembled
As one to whom a poison cup
Was given to drink and die.
Broad-shouldered Bharata's heart
Throbbled like a woman's heart excited.
Everything swam before his eyes,
But he gathered himself and spoke :

'When the peerless prince my brother
Dasaratha's eldest son is living,

You counsel me to wear the crown.
 Revered sires, if this be ^{सर्वोत्तम} *dharma*,
 As it must be when you say it,
 Then who can blame my mother now ?
 Her deed stands well approved by you.
 Experienced in the affairs of kings,
 Tell me whether in the history of States
 From the earliest days of old till now,
 Was any younger son ever called
 To govern the land when the elder was alive ?

^{लज्जा}
 'It would be my shame, most honoured men.
 I may not do as you desire;
 I must go to the forest at once,
 And bring Rama back from exile ^{सर्वोत्तम}
 And see him duly installed as king,
 Else understand I am firmly resolved
 To spend my years in the forest too;
 Or else, revered sires, I die.' ^{दया}
^{मन्त्रिम (१५ १८-१०)}

Name. Daya SHANKER SINGH
 Whereat there was acclaim

Loud and universal :

'Noble prince, you need no crown,' they cried,

'Nor deeds nor sacrifices religious.

The fourteen worlds may disappear—

Your glory shall be

For ever and ever !'

Said Bharata then to his brother :
 'Satrughna dear ! Let the trumpet sound
 And be it proclaimed that Bharata goes
 To bring the lawful king
 Home to Ayodhya again !
 Let a great army prepare
 At once to march with me.'

The army marched along
 Chariots, horses and elephants :
 Bui B̄harata walked,
 'My lord and brother has shown the way,'
 Said he, and went on foot.

The prince and his army marched
 Through country waving with corn
 Even like the land watered by holy *Kaveri*
 And reached the forest bank of Ganga.
 The prince's plight drew pity
 From man and bird and beast
 And even from the rooted trees.

Guha watched from the other bank :
 Sumantra on the northern bank
 Saw Guha and knew him well.

To the prince he ran and said :
 'See there gallant Guha
 Dearest friend of Rama.
 This man of granite strength
 And loyalty limitless
 Dark and beautiful of form,
 He is waiting on the road
 To give you worthy welcome.'

The prince of spotless mind
 Was joyous at hearing this and said :
 'Is he the friend who did embrace
 My banished brother and solaced him ?
 Then I must hasten forward
 Before he arrives here,
 And tender him my gratitude.'

Impatient with love
 Bharata with his brother
 Went to the river bank and stood.
 The forest chieftain saw
 From where he stood afar
 And was amazed !

And Guha said to himself :
 'The prince is so like dear lord Rama,
 And he who stands beside him too

Is a very likeness of beloved Lakshmana.
 It seems this prince is lamenting
 And has upon him the habit of hermits.

'He salutes Rama
 Turning to where he must be
 Even without seeing him.
 O ! was I not mad to think
 That brother of Rama
 Could ever do aught so vile.'

Bharata stood with palms joined;
 And when Guha bowed obeisance,
 The prince before whom
 The very gods were humble
 Fell at Guha's feet.

And the forest chieftain
 Lifted him up with love
 Greater than a father's love,
 And clasped him to his rugged bosom,
 Guha, most worthy of men,
 Who has found a place
 In the hearts of pious mortals
 Through the ages since Rama's time.

Asked Guha,
 'Prince of mighty frame,

What is your mission ?

Said Bharata in answer :

'My father that ruled an empire

Deflected the course of ancient custom.

I have come to set that right

And take the king home to the city.'

The woodmen's chief who heard these words

Burst into tears of joy.

Down he fell on the ground again

And locked Bharata's beautiful feet

In his rough hands and wept.

'The kingship of the world was yours,

Which at your mother's desire

Your father gave to you.

You refused to touch the gift,

Avoiding it as an evil thing.

Grief is in your face

Like a great river dammed :

Admirable soul, your greatness is more

Than a thousand Rama's, believe me, prince ?

Nishada

Asked Bharata :

'Guha dear, tell me where

My brother rested here with you ?

Said the *nishada*, 'Come with me

I will take you to the holy spot.'

Something is happening, Lakshmana thought,
 And up a steep hill he climbed to see.
 An army was coming !
 Down he leaped and ran to his brother.

'Brother,' said he, 'an army is on us
 Led by Bharata newly installed;
 Foolish pride has made him blind
 To your strength and mine !'

And saying this he rushed to the hut
 And returned full panoplied
 With bow in hand and quiver strapped
 Wanting orders ready for battle
 Against the impious usurping brother.

Rama let his brother talk
 For he knew his love
 And the anguish of his heart.
 'Lakshmana dear, do I not know
 The might of your arm and the power of your bow ?

'But listen, now, how can you think
 A brother in whom flows the blood
 Of our long line of honoured kings

Can do a deed so foul as you fear ?
Your love for me has warped your judgement.

'Did we not ever find our brother
The embodiment of noble deeds,
The very image of *dharma* itself ?
The *Vedas* may err, not he !
Proud were we of Bharata,
Strong-armed but ever just.
Shall we suspect sin in him
Whom we both knew well to be
The axle-tree of righteousness ?

'O Lakshmana dear, do not this wrong,
The very thought would be a sin.
Bharata surely comes but to see me
Impelled by love and not for greed.'

Thus spoke Rama in kindly tones
And almost then stood before them
Bharata ! For ordering the army
To stay behind, he had hurried forward.
O the sight ! Is it the brother
Or Grief itself in human form ?
Emaciated, with tear-flooded eyes,
Distraught, clasped hands raised overhead,
Innocence herself begging forgiveness—
Rama saw this figure of sadness

And gravely turning to Lakshmana said,
 'See you the enemy whose army you thought
 To smite and utterly destroy ?'
 Lakshmana was pale with shame and grief.
 Down dropped the bow from his hand;
 And the tears streamed from his eyes.

And Bharata spoke :
 'What have you done, my lord and brother ?
 Cruel to me and pitiless,
 You left your post of inviolable duty,
 Allowed the rule of ancient custom
 To be deflected from its course.'
 This stern impeachment done
 His Strength did fail,
 For now he saw
 The dear dead father in Rama.

He fell prostrate and the anguish of his heart
 His eyes did pour on Rama's lotus feet.
 And Rama's tears came then in a flood
 Bathing Bharata's anchorite hair
 Like Ganga entering Siva's head.

He lifted him up
 And hugged him to his heart.
 Like two gods they stood,

Compassion and Innocence
Locked in embrace.

Gently he spoke : 'My brother,
How is the king our father ?
I trust his shoulders are as strong as ever ?'
Whereat Bharata said :
'Oh Rama ! Father is dead !
Death came to him in the shape
Of the cruel woman that gave me birth.
In the grief of your parting he languished and died.
Truth and body he left behind
And joined the gods to whom he belonged.'

At these words Rama reeled as one,
Once wounded, pierced in the wound again.
He fell and rolled on the ground,
Yes, even he that was god himself,
And wept like a child long and loud.

Vasistha spoke : 'Know you not, prince,
If men ~~are~~ born they must also die.
And man's sole companions
Are what he renounces and his works ?

'The king your father
Lived full and well,
Happy is he with the gods.

As is the custom of our people, so
 May your beautiful hands, my prince
 Offer oblations to the dead.'

And so the prince of Ayodhya
 Plunged in the river and there standing,
 Thrice out of his hands
 Reverently offered oblations to the Dead
 According to ancient custom.

Nobles and holy men
 And captains of the army
 Sat around the prince
 And his brothers three,
 When Rama gently spoke
 Assuaging Bharata's anguish.

'Our father the king is dead
 And by his firm command
 The kingdom now is yours.
 Instead of wearing a crown
 Why these habiliments of an anchorite ?'

Then rose Bharata
 Quivering with emotion :

His reverent hands were clasped
 As he faced his elder brother.
 'Pre-eminent custodian of *dharma* !
 Was it right for you
 Thus to leave your post of duty ?
 Great was our father's error;
 Infamous the wrong my mother wrought.
 Return and take your place, my brother,
 So wipe out these horrid stains
 Of error and wickedness.
 Deny not, brother, who art father too.'

Moved was Rama, and he saw
 Full well his spotless brother's anguished mind.
 'Brave brother, listen. It would be wrong
 For sons to cast the father and mother
 That gave them birth to eternal shame.
 Our duty lies, let us remember,
 In making glorious what they did.

'So, my brother, I am bound to do
 The king's behest; and these few years
 Be regent on my behalf
 And rule on my commission.'
 That Rama was right Bharata knew:
 'Brother dear, it shall be so.

'But I pray thee twice seven years hence

or return and relieve ;23: 00: 11:
Failing which O Rama, I swear
To return and relieve your deputy;
Failing which O Rama, I swear
Fire shall right this infamous wrong !
All purifying fire
Shall that day bathe your brother.
For whom all this wrong was done.

Rama was overwhelmed with joy.

That Bharata's anguish of heart was gone.
Rama was overwhelmed with joy.

That Bharata's anguish of heart was gone.

'Brother, so shall it be,' said Rama.

'Fourteen years !' said Bharata sobbing.

And grieved that that must be,

'I ask your blessing, brother,' said he.

'Give me the sandals which you wear.'

Rama took them off and gave the sandals

That hold the power to give

All the good that man may want—

The dust of Rama's feet.

'My crown !' said Bharata as on his head

He placed that precious gift;

And tears rolled down his noble face.

Then on the ground he fell

In humble salutation,

And he rose with the dust all over him,

Like the golden image of a god;
 And more beautiful than ever was he.
 The city had filled the silent forest.
 And now it was time to depart.
 Sadly the mothers returned.
 And so the women accompanying them.
 Then the troops
 With the city-throng behind:
 And following them,
 Sadly, the sage Vasishta.

NOTES

Page Line

1 1 *Ayodhya* : was the capital of Kosala, the kingdom of the rulers of solar dynasty, and Dasaratha was one of them. He ruled Ayodhya and was the overlord of the India of his days. It is said that Dasaratha ruled for many years. He had no issue, so in his old age he performed special 'Yajna.' as a result of which his three wives bore him four sons. The eldest Kausalya gave birth to Rama, the youngest Kaikeyi had Bharata and the second Sumitra bore twins, Lakshmana and Satrughna.

2 *To bring Prince Bharata home* : When Bharata's mother Kaikeyi demanded that her son Bharata be made the prince regent and Rama be sent to exile for 14 years, Bharata was not at Ayodhya. He was at Kekaya, the kingdom of his maternal uncle. So when the events took this turn at Ayodhya, Bharata was immediately called back to Ayodhya.

19 *"And is the dear crown prince well ?"* : Crown prince was Rama as the crown of Ayodhya lawfully belonged to Rama.

Note how eager is Bharata to know about the welfare of Rama !

2 2 *Royal epistle* : Letter from king Dasaratha.

6 *And first.....his head* : This shows what great respect Bharata has for his father's letter.

14-15 *No time.....or day* : Indians start on a journey after considering what day and time will be most auspicious for it.

Page Line

- 2 17 *His uncle's leave was taken* : Bharata took leave
from his maternal uncle.
- 21 *Kosala* : The kingdom of Dasaratha having
Ayodhya as its capital.
- 3 2 *And Ayodhya's.....lotus* : Note the beautiful
simile which is most appropriate here.
- 8 *Sad tidings* : Sad news: Transferred epithet—
sadness of men noted as sadness of news.
- 21 *Lotus feet* : This is a beautiful Indian metaphor.
- 4 18 *Discounselate* : One who could not be consoled:
- 21-24 *Now let me.....fatherless me* : What a great love
and respect Bharata has for Rama!
- 5 11 *The books ordained exile* : The Vedas fixed the
punishment of exile.
- 14 *Did the fates contrive* : The goddesses of fate
brought it about.
- 22-23 *It was.....against guru* ! : In those days sin against
guru, the teacher, was punished by such severe
punishment as exile.
- 6 7 *Penance* : Self-imposed denial of comfort or
punishment to wash away guilt.
- 22 *Spouted* : Threw out as from a pipe.
- 23 *Wrath* : Anger.
- 7 5 *Machination* : Conspiracy, contrivance.
- 6 *Consigned* : Handed over, sent to suffer.
- 8 *Double achievement* : Success in two things :
death of the father and exile to the brother.
- 11 *This abominable plan* : The plot of snatching the
kingdom which deserves contempt and condem-
nation.
- 8 5 *Bereaved* : Deprived (of her son and husband)

Page Line

8 10 *Craves* : Eagerly desires.16-17 *Were you all...Death ?* : How sorry is Bharata !
In sorrow he forgets that Death cannot be controlled.20 *Heaven's charioteer* : Sun.22 *Ancient royal clan* : Ancient solar dynasty.9 1 *Scion* : Descendant.6 *The twice-bereaved queen* : Queen Kausalya who had been deprived of her son Rama and who had lost her husband Dasaratha.10 9 *The mantle has fallen on you unsought* : Though you did not want to be the king, 'but' without your seeking the responsibility of ruling over the people has fallen on your shoulders.12 *Counsel* : Advice.17-18 *As one to.....and die* : The crown which was the right of his brother Rama, was like poison to Bharata, who trembled at the very idea of accepting it.12 15 *Holy Kaveri* : The great river of the Southern peninsula of India where the Tamil poet Kam-ban flourished. Kavery is regarded as holy river in the South as the Ganga in the North.20 *Guha* : The chief of a clan of the forest on the banks of the Ganga. He had a fleet of boats. When Rama reached there Guha treated him with great kindness and took him across the river.21 *Sumantra* : Minister-in-waiting to Dasaratha. He drove the royal chariot of the exiled prince Rama to the forest and had to leave him there

Page Line

- with an anguished heart.
- 13 4 *Granite* : A kind of hard rock, hence 'of granite strength' means very strong.
- 12 *Solaced* : Gave comfort and consolation to.
- 15 *Gratitude* : Thankfulness for treating Rama with kindness.
- 14 3 *And has upon him the habit of hermits* : Is clad like hermits.
- 9 *Could ever do aught so vile* : Seeing the great army marching with Bharata, Guha had first thought that Bharata was marching with an army to
 attack Rama. But seeing the condition of Bharata he felt that Bharata could not do a wicked thing like this.
- 11 *Obeisance* : Salutation.
- 18 *Rugged* : Rough. The frame of Guha was rough on account of hard work.
- 15 1 *What is your mission* : Guha puts a direct question to Bharata why he was coming with an army and what his aim was.
- 4 *Deflected the course of ancient custom* : Deviated from the old tradition that the eldest son should be successor to the crown.
- 18 *Like a great river dammed* : ~~Guha~~ ^{like} ~~is~~ ^{flowing} as a great river overflows all round and is fierce when a dam is put across it.
- 19-20 *Admirable.....Rama's* : This is the correct estimate of Bharata's character showing that Bharata is Kamban's supreme ideal.
- 24 *Nishada* : Guha. Guha was nishada by caste. Nishada was a low caste of forest dwellers.

- | Page | Line | |
|------|------|--|
| 16 | 6 | <i>Newly installed</i> : Recently made the ruler of Kosala. |
| | 10 | <i>Full panoplied</i> : Fully armoured and ready for defence with all weapons. |
| | 13 | <i>Impious usurping brother</i> : Wicked brother, Bharata, who had unlawfully snatched the kingdom of Kosala from the lawful ruler, Rama. (This was the momentary thought of Lakshmana. The fact was otherwise.) |
| 17 | 2 | <i>Has warped your judgement</i> : Has made your judgement wrong. |
| | 6 | <i>The Vedas may err, not he</i> : This is the character of Bharata. Even the supreme books of religion, the Vedas, may make mistakes but Bharata cannot make mistakes. |
| | 11 | <i>The axle-tree of righteousness</i> : One round whom justice, uprightness and virtue revolved and who was the supporter of these virtues. |
| | 15 | <i>Impelled by</i> : Moved on by. |
| | 22 | <i>Emaciated</i> : Grown lean and thin. |
| | 23 | <i>Distraught</i> : In violent agitation. |
| 18 | 3 | <i>To smite</i> : To overthrow in battle. |
| | 10 | <i>You left.....duty</i> : You ignored your sacred duty to rule and protect the people, and came away. |
| | 13 | <i>Stern impeachment</i> : Harsh accusation. |
| | 20 | <i>Bharata's anchorite hair</i> : The rough uncombed hair of Bharata like those of a hermit. Remember Bharata had clad himself as a hermit and had walked on foot from Ayodhya as Rama had done. |
| 19 | 10 | <i>Languished</i> : Pined : Grew weak. |

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19	13	<i>Reeled</i> : Staggered and whirled round.
	18	<i>Vasishtha</i> : A renowned sage, chief priest of Dasaratha's court. He is said to have been a direct descendant of Brahma.
20	3	<i>Oblations</i> : Something offered to gods.
	14	<i>Assuaging</i> : Lessening.
	19	<i>Habiliments of an anchorite</i> : Dress of a hermit.
21	7	<i>Wrought</i> : Did.
	9	<i>Wipe out</i> : Remove.
	„	<i>Horrid stains</i> : Offensive causes of shame.
	20	<i>Behest</i> : Command.
22	1	<i>Deputy</i> : Bharata, whom Rama was deputing to rule on his behalf.
	19	<i>Precious gift</i> : Sandals of Rama which were a priceless gift for Bharata.

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QUESTIONS

1. What were the boons demanded by Kaikeyi from Dasaratha, and what was their result ?
2. Give in your own words the interview between Bharata and his mother, Kaikeyi, immediately on Bharata's arrival in Kosala from Kekaya.
3. What was the advice of Vasishta and the general council to Bharata when they found him disconsolate ? How did Bharata react to it, and what did he decide ?
4. Describe in your own words the meeting of Guha and Bharata.
5. What were Lakshmana's first thoughts on seeing the army of Bharata approaching the place where Rama was staying ? What did Rama say to Lakshmana ?
6. What was the outcome of the meeting of Bharata, Rama and other elders and chiefs in the forest ?
7. Give a short character-sketch of Bharata.
8. Show that Bharata is Kamban's supreme ideal.
9. What character of Kaikeyi has been painted in this poem ?
10. Give a short character-sketch of Guha showing that in those days character was supreme, and not caste.

श्री २०१७